



NEWS RELEASE

Taste of Kent Awards 2010 springs to life this Autumn in the 'Garden of England'

Friday 24 September 2010: Kent's most popular food and drink awards – the Taste of Kent Awards – was launched at an official reception today with the competition's main sponsors, Whitehead Monckton. The Taste of Kent Awards, now in its sixth year, recognises the county's food and drink heroes and provides the general public with a unique opportunity to hand pick and vote for their favourite food and drink producers, retailers, restaurants, pubs and farmers' markets.

The competition is the brainchild of Produced in Kent, which champions Kent's food and drink producers and retailers. Speaking at the launch, Julie Monkman, manager at Produced in Kent, thanked Whitehead Monckton for its "proactive support" together with the numerous category sponsors who continue to make Kent's benchmark of food and drink excellence a reality.

Julie Monkman said: "Last year's competition clearly hit the right flavour with the general public as voting leapt to over 10,000 votes, smashing all previous records! We saw an incredible 89 per cent increase in votes from the general public and consumers nominated over 680 food and drink businesses and products in the county. This was an impressive 50 per cent increase on the previous year and a clear indication that the people of Kent really care about food and drink in the 'Garden of England'.

Now consumers can be part of the 2010 selection process as online voting opened today on the dedicated awards website - www.tasteofkentawards.co.uk. With 12 categories, voters can place their nominations in one category, several categories, or all 12.

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In an exciting evolution for the 2010 competition, six of the categories have been re-branded to reflect the changes in food and drink retailing, production and dining out. The six new categories include 'Kent Meat Retailer of the Year', 'Best Kentish Brewery of the Year', 'Best Kentish Vineyard of the Year', 'Best Kentish Cider Maker of the Year', 'Kent Artisan Food Producer of the Year' and 'Kent Dining Pub of the Year'.

These new arrivals join established favourites including 'Kent Juice Producer of the Year', 'Kent Local Food Retailer of the Year', 'Kent Seafood Retailer of the Year', 'Kent Food Product of the Year' and 'Kent Restaurant of the Year'.

The three companies receiving the most votes from the public in each category will be shortlisted and go before an expert judging panel, mystery shoppers and mystery diners in January 2011. The final 12 winners will be revealed at a glittering awards ceremony on 25 February 2011 at Leeds Castle.

The Taste of Kent Awards have become a much sought after hallmark of quality, with many of the county's leading companies keen to support and sponsor the 12 categories that make up the awards. This year Produced in Kent is delighted to welcome sponsorship support from Barclays Bank, Cask Marque, Hadlow College, KCC (Kent County Council), Kent Life, kff (Kent Frozen Foods), NFU Mutual, Opies, sff (Stephen's Fresh Foods), South East Seafood, Visit Kent and WK Finn-Kelcey. Taste of Kent Awards is also delighted to have the media support of Kent Life, BBC Radio Kent and KOS Media.

Julie Monkman, Produced in Kent's manager, said: "We are delighted to have the generous sponsorship backing and media support of these companies for the 2010 awards. The huge swell in voting last year is a clear indication that the county has taken the Taste of Kent Awards to their hearts. The awards have become the ultimate accolade of excellence for the companies who win them."

Vote online now at www.tasteofkentawards.co.uk and be sure to cast your votes before the closing date of **3 January 2011**. Alternatively, pick up a voting form at your nearest farmers' market and post to Produced in Kent Ltd, Bourne Grange Stables, Tonbridge Road, Hadlow, Kent TN11 0AU.

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Photo Caption: Taste of Kent Award 2009 winners celebrate outside Leeds Castle

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NOTE TO THE EDITOR:

See over to view the twelve individual categories.

TASTE OF KENT AWARDS 2010 CATEGORIES
<p>Kent Meat Retailer of the Year Sponsored by NFU Mutual A retailer selling a minimum of 50% of its meat that has spent the majority of its life in Kent. The retailer will be required to provide evidence of traceability to substantiate this</p>
<p>Best Kentish Brewery of the Year Sponsored by Cask Marque Beer made from hops predominantly grown in Kent at a brewery based in Kent</p>
<p>Best Kentish Vineyard of the Year Sponsored by Kent Life Wine made from grapes predominantly grown in Kent at a vineyard based in Kent</p>
<p>Best Kentish Cider Maker of the Year Sponsored by WK Finn-Kelcey Cider or Perry produced in Kent made predominantly from apples or pears grown in Kent at a business based in Kent</p>
<p>Kent Juice Producer of the Year Sponsored by KCC (Kent County Council) Producer of fruit juice made from fruit grown in Kent</p>
<p>Kent Local Food Retailer of the Year Sponsored by sff (Stephen's Fresh Foods) A retailer selling a minimum of 50% of its produce/products sourced from Kent. The retailer will be required to provide evidence of this from its list of suppliers.</p>
<p>Kent Seafood Retailer of the Year Sponsored by South East Seafood Must demonstrate active local sourcing where and when products are available from within Kent</p>
<p>Kent Food Product of the Year Sponsored by Opies A product made from primary produce that has spent the majority of its life in Kent and/or undergone a value added process over and above re-packaging or re-marketing.</p>
<p>Kent Artisan Food Producer of the Year Sponsored by Barclays Bank A Kent producer who creates a handmade food product using ingredients predominantly sourced from Kent</p>
<p>Kent Restaurant of the Year Sponsored by Visit Kent Must actively use produce/products where and when available from within Kent and demonstrate this commitment in menus & marketing</p>
<p>Kent Dining Pub of the Year Sponsored by kff (Kent Frozen Foods) Must actively use produce/products, beer, cider and juices when available from within Kent and demonstrate this commitment in menus & marketing</p>
<p>Kent Farmers' Market of the Year Sponsored by Hadlow College Must be a farmers' market recognised and listed by the Kent Farmers' Market Association on: www.kentfarmersmarkets.org.uk</p>